

# The Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland, Inclusion Scotland and Sensing Climate

## Lived experience workshop



## Background

On 4 November 2025 we had a **lived experience** workshop.



**Lived experience** means what people know based on the things they have gone through or experienced.

The workshop was with:

- Inclusion Scotland
- the **Environmental** Rights Centre for Scotland
- the Sensing **Climate** project.



Our **environment** means the surroundings and conditions we live and work in.

**Climate** means what the weather is like over long periods of time.

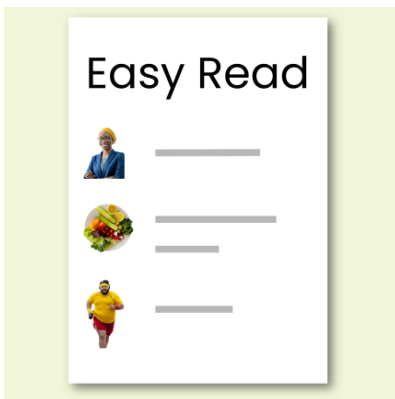


The workshop had 10 **participants** – this means people taking part - in real life and online.



The participants:

- shared their experiences
- talked about what planning for emergencies with disabled people could look like.



Before the workshop participants had been given:

- a short report
- an easy-read **policy review** about **emergency planning** with disabled people.



A **policy** is a plan that explains the work an organisation wants to do and how it will be done.

When it is checked to see what is in the policy and what might be missing it is called a **policy review**.



An **emergency** is something dangerous that needs quick action to keep people safe.

This could be something like a flood or fire.



**Emergency planning** means plans made by a government, council and communities to cope with emergencies.

These plans have ways that can stop people from getting hurt or dying.



The workshop:

- listened to the experiences of disabled people and what they thought of emergency planning
- discussed the information in the policy review and what we need to add to it



- found out who would be interested in taking part in future climate and emergency planning.



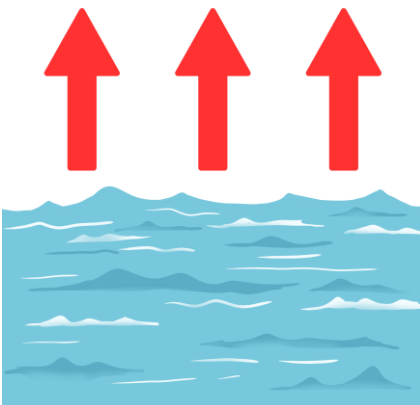
There were 4 groups including one online and each group had:

- a person who helps the group work together
- a person writing down what is said
- 2 questions to talk about.

The questions were:

1. 20 years in the future, planning for climate emergencies like floods and hot weather includes:

- what disabled people need
- what is most important to them.



There is a flood in your area.

You are safe and have all you need.

How have you been kept safe?



- at home
- during **evacuation** - this means moving away from a dangerous place to somewhere safe
- in the **emergency centre** – this is a place you can go to until it is safe to go back home
- when you return home.



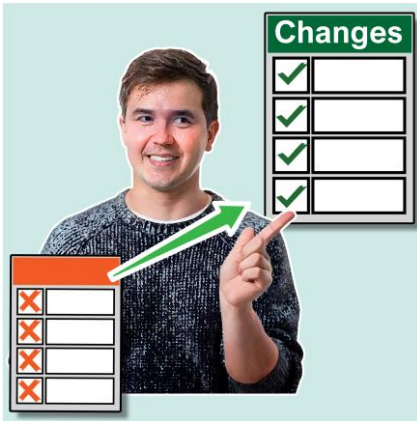
2. What can people in charge of emergency planning learn from you as a disabled person?

## What the discussions told us



Participants agreed that emergency planning in Scotland is currently not **inclusive** for disabled people.

**Inclusive** means everyone can take part and have the same choices and chances.



Participants said that not enough has been done to include disabled people in emergency planning in Scotland.

The rest of this document says what they felt were the most important things that need to change.

## Being included in all parts of emergency planning



All parts of emergency planning must:

- prepare for the situation
- control the situation
- understand people's experiences
- be **trauma informed**.



**Trauma** is the emotions you feel when something terrible like an accident or frightening event has happened.

**Trauma informed** means understanding how trauma can make people feel and behave.



Emergency planning must include:

- ways to prepare for emergencies
- ways to respond to emergencies to keep people safe
- ways to recover from emergencies.

The knowledge, experiences and needs of disabled people must be used in:



- designing how to tell people about the risk of emergencies and how to prepare for them
- checking emergency preparations, response and recovery plans
- testing emergency responses
- having accessible emergency centres.



Disabled people should be:

- paid for their skills and knowledge
- treated in the same way as anyone else when decisions are made.

## Learning from disabled people



To have good emergency planning we must make connections with Disabled People's Organisations (**DPOs**), Deaf-led organisations, and community networks before emergencies happen.

It is important to learn from the experiences of disabled people in a **crisis**.



A **crisis** is when someone is in great difficulty or danger.

Disabled people have ideas and information that are often missed.

Each council should have an accessibility working group with regular training by DPOs for:



- **emergency responders** – this means trained staff or volunteers who give medical care and keep people safe
- planners
- communities.



Community networks must be trained to know how to respond to climate emergencies.

They should be supported by emergency responders who understand the needs of disabled people.

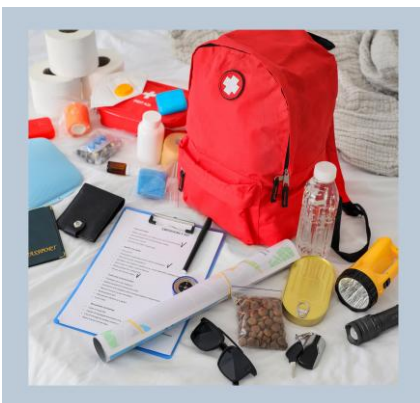
## Giving disabled people skills to deal with emergencies



Disabled people should have clear information and training on how to support themselves in emergencies.

Information and training should include:

- when, where and how to evacuate and return safely
- how to develop an **emergency grab bag** – this means a bag that is already packed with things you need in an emergency like food, water and first aid items.





Disabled people should get support if they are not able to follow this information or to do training on their own.

They must be able to make their own decisions like choosing not to return home until they feel safe.



There must be ways to hear from disabled people about their experiences.

This information can be used to make emergency planning and support better in the future.



These services must stay open and working when there is a crisis:

- health
- social care support
- water and energy systems
- communication.

Organisations must work well together so that:



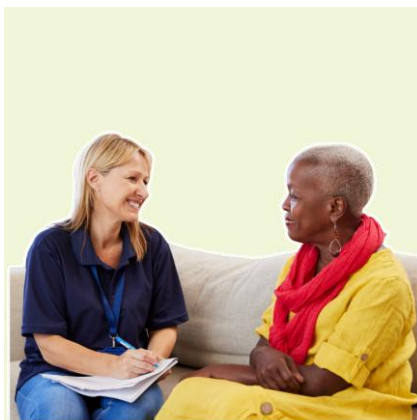
- people can get repairs done quickly
- medical and social care support stays in place
- there is a list of people who would need extra support if their essential services are cut off in an emergency.

People like personal assistants, carers and interpreters should be available and able to stay with the disabled person they are supporting.



This helps to make sure people still get the care they need and can communicate.

Councils must replace any equipment that disabled people need and they must make sure that support services are still available.



Emergency centres must be set up in accessible buildings and have:



- the right lighting
- quiet spaces or ear protection to block out noise
- accessible toilets, sleeping areas and seating
- **hearing loops** – these are listening systems that support people with hearing loss to hear more clearly
- charging stations for mobility aids
- spare assistive equipment if it has been left behind, lost or damaged
- fridges for medications.



When disabled people cannot return home they must be first to get accessible temporary accommodation.



Other practical supports include:

- accessible transport
- clear signs
- emergency plans for their local area given in ways they can understand
- **accessibility passports** – these are documents that explain what someone needs to make things accessible so they can fully take part in something.

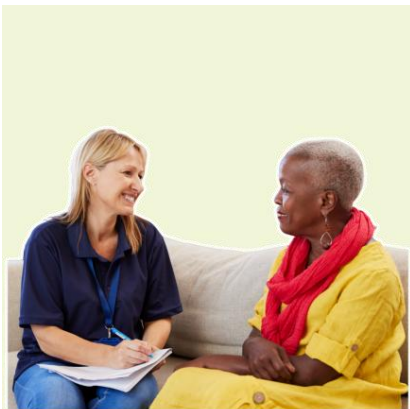


## Practical advice, communications and support



Disabled people should be able to share information about any support needs that:

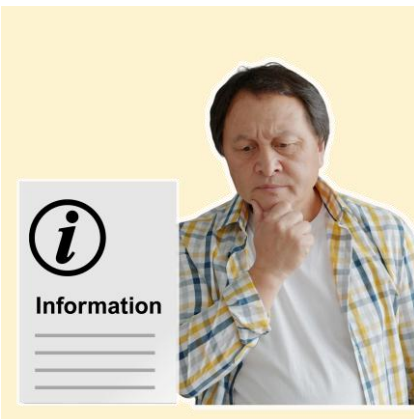
- they would have in an emergency
- that could not be met by the people and organisations they are already connected to.



This information should be kept private.



Regular practices, training, and public information campaigns are needed to make sure that everyone knows what to do in an emergency.



There must always be accessible communication including:

- warnings
- updates
- information about important decisions.



Information must not just be available online and must be in:

- languages other than English
- Easy Read
- British Sign Language
- captions
- braille.



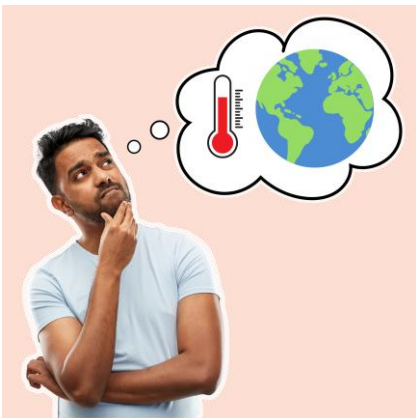
There must be regular updates of information and good ways of sharing information.



Having enough money is important to personal safety and being able to cope with difficult things.

It means someone can afford the costs of:

- **insurance** – this means a way to protect against the cost of repairing or replacing something if it is damaged or lost
- ways to prepare for and deal with **climate change**.



**Climate change** means the harmful warming of our planet caused by humans.



We should find out:

- where there is accessible and adaptable housing in Scotland
- if it is at risk from climate change.

This would tell us what households need support first and what support they need.



Support must work closely with the people affected and could include:

- ways to cope with the risks of flooding or strong heat that do not affect accessibility
- alternative accessible housing in areas of lower risk.



All new homes, transport systems and emergency centres should be able to cope with climate changes and be accessible.

